GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS
LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO:404
ANSWERED ON:22.04.2002
COMMERCIALIZATION OF GENETICALLY MODIFIED VARIANT CROPS
KAMBALAPADU E. KRISHNAMURTHY;SULTAN SALAHUDDIN OWAISI

Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) the names of countries where cultivation of BT Cotton variant crop is banned alongwith the reasons therefor;

(b) whether the Government have recently approved commercialization of genetically modified variant crops particularly BT Cotton and Rice;

(c) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor;

(d) whether any studies/field trials had been conducted before giving the approval;

(e) if so, the details of the findings;

(f) whether some more such crops are likely to be given approval in near future;

(g) if so, the details thereof;

(h) whether the Government have received any request from different States with regard to cultivation/commercialization of the said crops;

(i) if so, the State-wise details thereof and action taken thereon; and

(j) the steps taken to create awareness among the public particularly farmers in remote areas of the country about the said crops?

Answer

MINISTER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R.BAALU)

(a) to (j) A statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN PARTS (a) TO (j)OF REPLY TOTHE LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO. 404 BY SH SULTAN SALAHUDDIN OWAISI & SHRI K. E. KRISHNAMURTHY REGARDING `COMMERCIALISATION OF GENET MODIFIED VARIANT CROPS` DUE FOR REPLY ON 22-04-2002

(a) Cultivation of Bt cotton per se is not banned in any cotton growing countries. Bt Cotton is registered for cultivation in countries such as USA, Australia, South Africa, Argentina, and Mexico after approval by the competent authorities.

(b), (c), (d) & (e) The Genetic Engineering Approval Committee (GEAC) set up under Rule 4 of the Rules for Manufacture, Use, Import Export and Storage of Hazardous Microorganisms/ Genetically Engineered Organisms or cells, 1989 notified under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986 has approved commercialization of Bt cotton only. The Maharashtra Hybrid Seed Company (MAHYCO) has been developing and evaluating Bt cotton since 1996. The decision of granting approval subject to certain conditions for commercial cultivation of Bt cotton is based on the data generated on environmental safety, food safety and large scale field studies conducted to evaluate the agronomic potential at different locations. These field trials have been conducted by MAHYCO as well as the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR). These trials have been monitored by the Monitoring and Evaluation Committee (MEC) of the Department of Biotechnology, and the ICAR, respectively. The MEC and ICAR recommended Bt cotton for cultivation.

(f) & (g) The approval for commercial cultivation of genetically modified crops shall be granted on a case-by-case basis only after examination of all the required data on the particular crop.

(h) & (i) The state governments of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Maharashtra, requested for granting approval for cultivation of Bt cotton.

(j) Under the various conditions attached to the approval, the MAHYCO has been directed to undertake an awareness and education programme interalia through development and distribution of educational material on Bt cotton for farmers, dealers and others. In addition, the company has also been directed to provide detailed directions for use including sowing pattern, pest management, suitability of agro-climatic condition etc. in vernacular languages in the seed packets.